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A N  
E P I S T L E  
T O  
D R. S H E B B E A R E:

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A N O D E  
TO SIR FLETCHER NORTON,  
IN IMITATION OF HORACE, ODE VIII. BOOK IV.

---

By MALCOLM MACGREGGOR, of Knightfbridge, Esq.  
Author of the Heroic Epistle to Sir Wm. Chambers, &c.

---

FOURTH EDITION.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

THOUGH I look upon this Poem, in point of elevation of diction and sublimity of sentiment, to be as highly heroical, as my Epistle to Sir William Chambers, yet I have not thought proper to add that epithet to it on the title-page. I am willing to wish that first production of my muse may preserve the distinction which it now possesses, of being called *The Heroic Epistle, par excellence*. Besides this consideration, the different ranks of the two persons, to whom these two works are addressed, require a difference to be made in this matter ; and it would be unpardonable in me not to discriminate between a Comptroller of his Majesty's Works, and the Hackney Scribbler of a Newspaper ; between a Placeman and a Pensioner, a Knight of the Polar Star, and a broken Apothecary.







A N  
E P I S T L E  
T O  
D R. S H E B B E A R E.

O For a thousand tongues ! and every tongue  
Like Johnson's, arm'd with words of six feet long,  
In multitudinous vociferation  
To panegyricize this glorious nation,  
Whose liberty results from her taxation.

}

Ver. 2. *Words of six feet long.*] Sefquipedalia verba. HOR.

B O,

O, for that passive, pensionary spirit, 6  
 That by its prostitution proves its merit !  
 That rests on RIGHT DIVINE, all regal claims,  
 And gives to George, whate'er it gave to James :  
 Then should my Tory numbers, old Shebbeare, 10  
 Tickle the tatter'd fragment of thy ear !  
 Then all that once was virtuous, wise, or brave,  
 That quell'd a tyrant, that abhorr'd a slave,  
 Then Sydney's, Russell's patriot fame should fall,  
 Besmear'd with mire, like black Dalrymple's gall, 15  
 Then, like thy prose, should my felonious verse  
 Tear each immortal plume from Nassau's hearse,  
 That modern monarchs, in that plumage gay,  
 Might stare and strut, the peacocks of a day.  
 But I, like Ansty, feel myself unfit 20  
 To run, with hollow speed, two heats of wit.

Ver. 11. *Tickle the tatter'd fragment.*] Churchill, in alluding to this capital anecdote in our Doctor's life, says, in his poem called *The Author*,

The whole intent

Of that parade, was fame, not punishment.

Intimating that his ears received no detriment in the pillory. My line intimates, that they did. However, if my intimation be false, it is easily refuted : the Doctor has only to expose his ears again to the public, and the real fact will be flagrant.

He

He, at first starting, won both fame and money,  
 The betts ran high on Bladud's Ciceronè ;  
 Since distanc'd quite, like a gall'd jade he winces,  
 And lashes unknown priests, and praises well-known princes. 25  
 So I, when first I tun'd th' heroic lay,  
 Gain'd Pownall's praise, as well as Almon's pay.  
 In me the nation plac'd its tuneful hope,  
 Its second Churchill, or at least its Pope :  
 Proudly I prick'd along, Sir William's squire, 30  
 Bade kings recite my strains and queens admire ;  
 Chaste maids of honour prais'd my stout endeavour,  
 Sir Thomas swore " The fellow was damn'd clever."

Ver. 23. *Bladud's Ciceronè.*] Anglice, Bath Guide.

Ver. 25. *Lashes unknown priests.*] Without a note posterity will never understand this line. Two or three years ago this gentleman found himself libelled in a newspaper ; and on suspecting a certain clergyman to be the author, he wrote a first canto of a poem, called *The Priest Dissected*, in which he prepared all chirurgical matters previous to the operation. In the mean time the parson proved an *alibi*, and saved his bacon. To this first and unique canto the author prefixed a something in which he exculpated himself from being the author of the Heroic Epistle, which it seems had been laid to his charge during the time the clan of Macgreggors continued without a name, and which, as the world well knows, was the only reason which prevented me from claiming the merit of that production. It is to this something, that the latter part of the line alludes. For in it he had told the public, that his Majesty had ten children, which it knew very well before. Hence the epithet *well-known*.

Ver. 33. *Sir Thomas.*] The Petronius of the present age needs not the addition of a surname to make the world certain who is meant by this appellative.

But

But popularity, alas ! has wings,  
 And flits as soon from poets as from kings. 35  
 My pompous Postscript found itself disdain'd  
 As much as Milton's Paradise regain'd——  
 And when I dar'd the Patent Snuffers handle,  
 To trim, with Pinchy's aid, Old England's candle,  
 The lyric muse, so lame was her condition, 40  
 Could hardly hop beyond a third edition.  
 Yes, 'tis a general truth, and strange as true,  
 (Kenrick shall prove it in his next Review)  
 That no one bard, in these degenerate days,  
 Can write two works deserving equal praise. 45  
 Whether the matter of which minds are made  
 Be grown of late mephitic and decay'd,  
 Or wants phlogiston, I forbear to say,  
 The problem's more in Doctor Priestley's way.  
 He knows of spirit the material whole, 50  
 For Priestley has the cure of Sh-lb---e's foul.

Ver. 51. *The cure of Sh-lb---e's foul.*] It is not here insinuated, that the  
 foul in question wants curing. The word *cure* is here put for *care*, in the sense  
 in which ecclesiastical lawyers use *cura animarum*.

Enough of souls, unless we waste a line,  
 Shebbeare! to pay a compliment to thine:  
 Which forg'd, of old, of strong Hibernian brass,  
 Shines through the Paris plaister of thy face, 55  
 And bronzes it, secure from shame, or sense,  
 To the flat glare of finish'd impudence.  
 Wretch! that from Slander's filth art ever gleaning,  
 Spite without spirit, malice without meaning:  
 The same abusive, base, abandon'd thing, 60  
 When pilloried, or pension'd by a King.  
 Old as thou art, methinks, 'twere sage advice,  
 That N--th should call thee off from hunting Price.  
 Some younger blood-hound of his bawling pack  
 Might forer gall his presbyterian back. 65  
 Thy toothless jaws should free thee from the fight;  
 Thou canst but mumble, when thou mean'st to bite.  
 Say, then, to give a *requiem* to thy toils,  
 What if my muse array'd her in thy spoils?  
 And took the field for thee, thro' pure good-nature; 70  
 Courts prais'd by thee, are curs'd beyond her satire.

Ver. 63. *From hunting Price.*] See a series of wretched letters, written by  
 Shebbeare, in the Public Advertiser, and other papers.

Yet, when she pleases, she can deal in praise:  
*Exempli gratia*, hear her fluent lays  
 Extol the present, the propitious hour,  
 When Europe, trembling at Britannia's power, 75  
 Bids all her princes, with pacific care,  
 Keep neutral distance, while she wings the war  
 Cross the Atlantic vast; in dread array,  
 Herself to vanquish in America.  
 Where soon, we trust, the brother chiefs shall see 80  
 The Congress pledge them in a cup of tea,  
 Toast peace and plenty to their mother nation,  
 Give three huzzas to George and to taxation,  
 And beg, to make their loyal hearts the lighter,  
 He'd send them o'er Dean T--k-r, with a mitre. 85  
 In Fancy's eye, I ken them from afar  
 Circled with feather wreaths, unstain'd by tar:  
 In place of laurels, these shall bind their brow,  
 Fame, honour, virtue, all are feathers now.  
 Ev'n beauty's self, unfeather'd, if we spy, 90  
 Is hideous to our Macaroni eye.

Foolish the bard, who, in such flimsy times,  
 Would load with satire or with sense his rhymes:

No, let my numbers flutter light in air,  
 As careless as the filken Gossamer. 95  
 Or should I, playful, lift the muse's scourge,  
 Thy cocks should lend their tails, my Cocking G-----,  
 To make the rod. So fear not thou the fong;  
 To whip a post, I ne'er will waste a thong.  
 Were I inclin'd to punish courtly tools, 100  
 I'd lash the knaves before I flapt the fools.  
 Gigantic vice should on my ordeal burn,  
 Long ere it came to thy poor pigmy turn.

But sure 'tis best, what'er rash Whigs may say,  
 To sleep within a whole skin, while one may; 105  
 For Whigs are mighty prone to run stark mad,  
 If credence in A--hb---ps may be had.  
 Therefore I'll keep within discretion's rule,  
 And turn true Tory of the M-----d school.  
 So shall I 'scape that creature's tyger paw, 110  
 Which some call Liberty, and some call Law:

Ver. 97. *My cocking G---*.] A great cock-fighter, and little senator, who, in the last Parliament, called the House's Postscript a Blah.

Ver. 111. *His play on Liberty*.] With courtiers and churchmen the terms are synonymous. See a late Sermon.

Whofe

Whose whale-like mouth is of that savage shape,  
 Whene'er his long-rob'd shewman bids him gape,  
 With tusks so strong, with grinders so tremendous,  
 And such a length of gullet, Heaven defend us! 115  
 That should you peep into the red-raw track,  
 'Twould make your cold flesh creep upon you back.  
 A maw like that, what mortal may withstand?  
 'Twould swallow all the poets in the land.

Come, then, Shebbeare! and hear thy bard deliver 120  
 Unpaid-for praises to thy pension-giver.  
 Hear me, like T--k-r, swear, "so help me, muse!"  
 I write not for preferment's golden views.  
 But hold—'tis on thy province to intrude:  
 I would be loyal, but would not be rude. 125  
 To thee, my veteran, I his fame consign;  
 Take thou St. James's, be St. Stephen's mine.

Hail, genial hotbed! whose prolific soil  
 So well repays all North's perennial toil,

Ver. 122. *Like T--k-r swear.*] The reverend Dean took a solemn oath in  
 one of his late pamphlets, that he would not be a bishop.

Whence



Whence he can raise, if want or whim inclines, 130  
 A crop of votes, as plentiful as pines.  
 Wet-nurse of tavern-waiters and Nabobs,  
 That empties first, and after fills their fobs :  
 (As Pringle, to procure a sane secretion, 135  
 Purges the *primæ viæ* of repletion.)  
 What scale of metaphor shall Fancy raise,  
 To climb the heights of thy stupendous praise ?

Thrice has the fun commenc'd his annual ride,  
 Since full of years and praise, thy mother died.  
 'Twas then I saw thee, with exulting eyes, 140  
 A second phoenix, from her ashes rise ;  
 Mark'd all the graces of thy loyal crest,  
 Sweet with the perfume of its parent nest.  
 Rare chick ! How worthy of all court caresses,  
 How soft, how echo-like, it chirp'd addresses. 145  
 Proceed, I cry'd, thy full-fledg'd plumes unfold,  
 Each true-blue feather shall be tipt with gold ;  
 Ordain'd thy race of future fame to run,  
 To do, whate'er thy mother left undone.  
 In all her smooth, obsequious paths proceed, 150  
 For, know, poor Opposition wants a head.

With horn and hound her truant schoolboys roam,  
 And for a fox-chace quit St. Stephen's dome,  
 Forgetful of their grandfire Nimrod's plan,  
 " A mighty hunter, but his prey was man." 155  
 The rest, at crouded Almacks, nightly bett,  
 To stretch their own beyond the nation's debt.  
 Vote then secure; the needful millions raise,  
 That fill the privy-purse with means and ways.  
 And do it quickly too, to shew your breeding, 160  
 The weazel Scots are hungry, and want feeding.  
 Nor need ye wait for that more plenteous season,  
 When mad America is brought to reason.  
 Obsequious Ireland, at her sister's claim,  
 (Sister or step-dame, call her either name) 165  
 Shall pour profusely her Pactolian tide,  
 Nor leave her native patriots unsupply'd.

Ver. 155. *A mighty hunter.*] A line of Mr. Pope's. If our younger senators would take the hint, and now and then hunt a minister instead of a fox, they might perhaps find some fun in it.

Ver. 161. *The weazel Scots.*] It is not I, but Shakespear, that gives my countrymen this epithet. See Hen. V. act 1. scene 2.

For once the eagle England *being in prey*,  
 'To her unguarded nest the *weazel* Scot  
 Comes sneaking, and so fucks her princely eggs, &c.

Earl N----t fung, while yet but simple Clare,  
 That wretched Ireland had no gold to spare.  
 How couldst thou, simple Clare ! that isle abuse, 170  
 Which prompts and pays thy linsy-woolsy muse ?  
 Mistaken peer ! Her treasures near can cease,  
 Did she not long pay Viry for our peace ?  
 Say, did she not, till rang the royal knell,  
 Irradiate vestal Majesty at Zell ? 175

Ver. 168. *Earl N----t fung.*] The intellect not only of posterity, but of the present reader, must here again be enlightened by a note : for this song was sung above two years ago, and is consequently forgotten. Yet if the reader will please to recollect how easily I brought to life Sir William Chambers's prose dissertation which had been dead half that time, he will, I hope, give me credit for being able to recover this dead poem from oblivion also. It was sent to her Majesty on her birth-day, with a present of Irish grogram ; and the newspaper of the day said (but I know not how truly) that the Queen was graciously pleased to thank the noble author for both his pieces of *stuff*. The poet's exordium seemed to have been taken from that very Ode in Horace which I have also attempted to imitate in this pamphlet. It began by assuring her Majesty, that Ireland was too poor to present her with a piece of gold plate.

Could poor *Ierne* gifts afford,  
 Worthy the consort of her lord,  
 Of purest gold a sculpter'd frame  
 Just emblem of her zeal should flame.

This supposed poverty of his native country struck me at the time as a mere *gratis-dictum*. I have therefore, from verse 180 to verse 186 of this epistle, endeavoured to refute it, for the honour of Ireland.

Sure

Sure then she might afford, to my poor thinking,  
 One golden tumbler, for Queen Charlotte's drinking.  
 I care not, if her hinds on fens and rocks,  
 Ne'er roast one shoulder of their fatted flocks,  
 Shall Irish hinds to mutton make pretensions? 180  
 Be theirs potatoes, and be ours their pensions.  
 If they refuse, great North, by me advis'd,  
 Enact, that each potatoe be excis'd.

Ah! hadst thou, North, adopted this sage plan,  
 And scorn'd to tax each British serving-man, 185  
 Thy friend Macgreggor, when he came to town,  
 (As poets should do) in his chaise and one,  
 Had seen his foot-boy Sawney, once his pride,  
 On stunt Scotch poney trotting by his side,  
 With frock of fustian, and with cape of red, 190  
 Nor grudg'd the guinea tax'd upon his head.  
 But tush, I heed not—for my country's good  
 I'll pay it—it will purchase Yankee blood—

Ver. 178.] *I care not, &c.*] Alluding to these lines in the same poem :

Where starving hinds from fens and rocks,

View pastures rich with herds and flocks.

And only view---forbid to taste, &c.

And in a note on the passage, he tells us that these hinds never eat animal food ;  
 but says not one word about potatoes, that most nutritious of all aliments,  
 which is surely very disingenuous.

And

And well I ween, for this heroic lay,  
Almon will give me wherewithal to pay. 195

Tax then, ye greedy ministers, your fill:  
No matter, if with ignorance or skill.  
Be ours to pay, and that's an easy task,  
In these blest times to have is but to ask.  
Ye know, whate'er is from the public prest, 200  
Will sevenfold sink into your private chest.  
For he, the nursing father, that receives,  
Full freely tho' he takes, as freely gives.  
So when great Cox, at his mechanic call,  
Bids orient pearls from golden dragons fall, 205  
Each little dragonet, with brazen grin,  
Gapes for the precious prize, and gulps it in.  
Yet when we peep behind the magic scene,  
One master-wheel directs the whole machine:  
The self-fame pearls, in nice gradation, all 210  
Around one common centre, rise and fall.

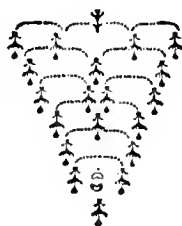
Ver. 211. *Around one common centre.*] I was let into this secret by my late patron, Sir William Chambers; who, as Mr. Cox's automata were very much in the Chinese taste, was very curious to discover their mechanism. I must do the Knight the justice to own that some of my best things are borrowed from him,

E

Thus

Thus may our state-museum long surprize ;  
 And what is sunk by votes in bribes arise ;  
 Till mock'd and jaded with the puppet-play,  
 Old England's genius turns with scorn away, 215  
 Ascends his sacred bark, the sails unfurl'd,  
 And fleers his state to the wide western world:  
 High on the helm majestic Freedom stands,  
 In act of cold contempt she waves her hands.  
 Take, slaves, she cries, the realms that I disown, 220  
 Renounce your birth-right, and destroy my throne.

F I N I S.



O D E

TO SIR FLETCHER NORTON,

IN IMITATION

O F

H O R A C E,

ODE VIII. BOOK IV.

Q. HORATII FLACCI,  
CARMEN VIII. LIB. IV.

*D*ONAREM *pateras*,<sup>a</sup> grataque commodus,

Cenforine, meis æra fodalibus :

Donarem tripodas, præmia fortium

Graiorum : *neque tu pessima munerum,*

*Ferres, divite me scilicet artium,*

5

*Quas aut<sup>b</sup> Parrhasius protulit, aut Scopas ;*

Hic faxo, liquidis ille coloribus

*Solers<sup>c</sup> nunc hominem ponere, nunc deum.*

Sed



HORACE, ODE VIII. BOOK IV.

I M I T A T E D.

**M**USE! were we rich in land, or flocks,  
 We'd fend Sir Fletcher a <sup>a</sup> gold box;  
 Who lately, to the world's surprize,  
 Advis'd his Sovereign to be wife.  
 The zeal of cits thou'd ne'er surpass us, 5  
 We'd make him speaker of Parnassus.  
 Or could I boast the mimic eye  
 Of <sup>b</sup> Townshend, or of Bunbury,  
 Whose art can catch, in comic guise,  
 "The manners living as they rise," 10  
 And find it the same easy thing  
 To <sup>c</sup>hit a Jollux or a king;  
 I'd hangings weave, in fancy's loom,  
 For Lady Norton's dressing room.

Line 12. *A Jollux.*] A phrase used by the *bon ton* for a fat parson. See a set of excellent Caricatures published by Bretherton, in New Bond-Street,

*Sed<sup>d</sup> non hæc mihi vis; nec<sup>e</sup> tibi talium*

*Res est aut animus deliciarum egens.*

10

*Gaudes carminibus: <sup>f</sup> carmina possumus*

*Donare, <sup>g</sup> & pretium dicere muneri.*

*Non<sup>h</sup> incisa notis marmora publicis,*

*Per<sup>i</sup> quæ spiritus & vita redit bonis*

*Post mortem ducibus: <sup>k</sup> non celeres fugæ,*

15

*Rejectæque retrorsum Annibalis minæ,*

*Non incendia Carthaginis impiæ,*

*Ejus, qui domitâ nomen ab Africâ*

*Lucratus rediit, clarius indicant*

Ver. 11. *Gaudes carminibus.*] The imitator found himself obliged to deviate in this place a little further from his original, than perhaps the strict critic will tolerate. But as he was not quite so certain of Sir Fletcher's fondness for poetry, as Horace seems to have been about the taste of Censorinus, he thought it best to express himself with a modest diffidence on that subject.

Laudes,

But <sup>d</sup> arts like these I don't pursue, 15  
 Nor <sup>e</sup> does Sir Fletcher heed virtù.  
 Enough for me in these hard times,  
 When ev'ry thing is tax'd but rhymes,  
 To <sup>f</sup> tag a few of these together :  
 Tho' I am quite uncertain, whether 20  
 My verse will much rejoice the knight,  
 As <sup>g</sup> great a store as I fet by't.  
 For verse, (I'd have Sir Fletcher know it)  
 When written by a genuine poet,  
 Has more of meaning and intent, 25  
 Than <sup>h</sup> modern acts of Parliament.

'Tis <sup>i</sup> fit and right, when heroes die,  
 The nation should a tomb supply ;  
 Yet, not the votes of both the houses,  
 Without th' assistance of the muses, 30  
 Can give that permanence of fame  
 That heroes from their country claim.  
 And tell me pray, to our good King,  
 What fame our present broils can bring,  
 Ev'n <sup>k</sup> should the Howes (which some folks doubt) 35  
 Put Washington to total rout,

Laudes, quam *Calabræ*, *Pierides*: neque

Si chartæ fileant quod benè feceris

Mercedem tuleris.

Quid foret Iliæ

*Mavortisque* <sup>m</sup> *puer*, si taciturnitas

Obstaret meritis invida Romuli?

*Ereptum* ° *fygius fluctibus* *Æacum*

Virtus, & favor, & <sup>n</sup> *lingua potentium*

*Vatum divitibus consecrat insulis.*

Dignum laude virum Musa <sup>p</sup> *vetat mori*,

*Cælo*

Unless his Treasurer in an ode,  
Exalt the victor to a god.

A man, I know, may get a pension  
Without the muse's intervention; 40  
Yet what are pensions to the praise  
Wrapt up in Caledonian lays?  
Say, Johnson! where had been <sup>m</sup> Fingal,  
But for Macpherfon's great assistance?  
The chieftain had been nought at all, 45  
A non-existing non-existence.  
Mac, like <sup>n</sup> a poet stout and good,  
First ° plung'd, then pluck'd him from oblivion's flood,  
And bad him bluster at his ease,  
Among the fruitful Hebrides. 50  
A <sup>p</sup> common poet can revive  
The man who once has been alive:  
But Mac revives, by magic power,  
The man who never liv'd before.  
Such

Ver. 37. *Unless his Treasurer.*] The late promotion of a poet to the treasurer-ship of the household, must necessarily give to all true votaries of the muses (as it does to me) great delectation. 'Tis whispered, by some people in the secret, that the very pacific cast of the Laureat's birth-day ode, occasioned the

*Cælo ⁊ Musa beat. Sic ⁊ Jovis interest*

*Optatis epulis impiger Hercules :*

*Clarum ⁊ Tyndaridæ fidus ab infimis*

*Quassas ⁊ eripiunt æquoribus rates :*

*Ornatus viridi tempora pampino*

*Liber ⁊ vota bonos ducit ad exitus.*

F I N I S.

Such *hocus-focus* tricks, I own, 55  
 Belong to Gallic bards alone.  
 My <sup>a</sup> muse would think her power enough,  
 Could she make some folks fever proof;  
 Dub them immortal from their birth,  
 And give them all their heaven on earth, 60  
 Then <sup>r</sup> Doctor K---, that broad divine,  
 With lords and dukes should ever dine;  
 Post, prate, and preach, for years on years,  
 And puff himself in Gazetteers.  
 Sandwich for aye, should shine the <sup>s</sup> star, 65  
 Propitious to our naval war;  
 Caulk all our vessels' <sup>t</sup> leaky sides,  
 And in the docks work double tides.  
 While Stormont, <sup>u</sup> grac'd with ribband green,  
 Keeps France from mixing in the riot, 70  
 Till Britain's lion vents his spleen,  
 And tears his rebel whelps in quiet.

noble bard's exaltation; as it was thought expedient to have another poetical placeman in readiness to celebrate the final overthrow of the American rebels. Nay, it is assured, that a reversionary grant of the office of laureat has in this instance been superadded to the treasureship, yet with the defalcation of the annual butt of sack, which the Lord Steward calculates will be a considerable saving to the nation.

T H E E N D.

*Just Published,*

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